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LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS UNVEILS 2001 POLICY AGENDA

Education, health and immigrant rights are top priorities for the Caucus.

Sacramento, Calif. - The 22 member California Latino Legislative Caucus unveiled their legislative priorities for the 2001-02 session yesterday. The Agenda for California's Working Families seeks to address numerous issues that impact all Californians, particularly in the policy areas of education, health and immigrant rights.

"Our Caucus has worked diligently to develop policy priorities that tackle low-performing schools, access to healthcare and the protection of civil rights of immigrants," said Assemblyman Firebaugh. "We strongly believe that these issues are critical to the economic prosperity and vitality of California."

2001 Latino Legislative Caucus priority policy initiatives include:

Health Policy Initiatives

HEALTHY FAMILIES

Legislative Proposals

- Expand eligibility in the Healthy Families and Medi-Cal programs to insure the children and parents in families earning up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Provide tax benefits to those responsible companies that initiate health benefits programs for their employees and to assist those companies in group purchasing arrangements or other cost saving procedures.

SIMPLIFY AND CONSOLIDATE REDUNDANT PROGRAMS

Legislative Proposals

- Eliminate duplications in calculating the value of Medi-Cal applicant's property at annual cost savings of \$500 million (Legislative Analyst).
- Simplify eligibility criteria, application processes and reduce administrative costs for additional cost savings.

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REDUCE THE NUMBER OF UNINSURED CALIFORNIANS

Legislative Proposal

- Strengthening the health care safety net as a cost-effective alternative to state-only insurance at a cost of \$100 million dollars to compensate non-profit clinics for an additional 1.2 million annual medical visits.

Education Policy Initiatives

UNCREDENTIALLED TEACHERS: LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Legislative Proposal

- Increase incentives and recruitment of teachers in low-performing schools and aim to ensure that no school in California will have more than 10 percent of non credentialed teachers

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Legislative Proposal

- Establish new criteria that will be equivalent to the standards and accountability measures to demonstrate the academic success and failure of English Learners.

SCHOOL FACILITIES: LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Legislative Proposal

- Guarantee that minimum of 25 percent of any new school bond will be available for qualified schools ranked in the lowest 20 percent in the API

Immigrant Rights Policy Initiatives

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF ALL CALIFORNIANS, INCLUDING IMMIGRANTS

Legislative Proposals

- Drivers' license are an important tool that enable Californians to be productive members of our economy and must be available to all qualified residents of our State.
- Access to higher education institutions must be open to all California students that have demonstrated academic achievement.
- Farmworkers, an important and crucial sector of our State's agricultural industry, must have safe and clean homes.
- Our State must protect legal immigrants who need critical health and social services.
- All Californians, including immigrants must be able to participate in all levels of government and should be provided the tools to ensure public participation.

Since its inception in 1973, with five Democratic Assembly Members, the Caucus has experienced tremendous growth. The Latino Legislative Caucus reached an all time high of 23 members after this past November 2000 election, including seven Senators and sixteen Assembly Members. The 22 members of the Caucus come from diverse geographical regions throughout the State and bring a wide array of perspectives to the State Legislature.